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A STUDY OF THE NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS
IN THE AREA OF SEX GUIDANCE IN
FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Problem

The guidance of children in experiences which contribute to the gaining of information and development of attitudes toward sex and its place in human life has been grossly neglected. As Gruenberg says:

Education . . . necessarily includes guidance and adjustment with respect to sex. Obviously, too, it is not always adequate; for many young people grow up with unsound attitudes about sex and false ideas regarding their obligations as members of families and of society.

. . .

Bewildered young people have been growing up to establish homes that are too often incapable of furnishing the knowledge that their children need.¹

Social and health workers, educators, and medical people are aware of the need for an intelligent training of the individual from childhood to adulthood in order that he may solve most successfully those problems that are the result of being male or female. Bigelow says:

Normal children are almost certain to get sexual information not later than early adolescent years, and usually from unreliable and vulgar sources. It is, therefore, not a question whether children of school ages should be taught the important facts of sex, but whether parents and trained teachers rather than playmates and other unreliable persons should be the instructors.²

There is evidence that the lay public is becoming more receptive to the inclusion of sex education in the public schools. At present,

1. Gruenberg, Benjamin C. How Can We Teach About Sex? Public Affairs Pamphlet, No. 122. New York: Public Affairs Committee Inc., 1946. p. 4.

2. Bigelow, Maurice A. Sex Education. Rev. New York: American Social Hygiene Association, 1936. p. 14.

with limited programs in many places, Oregon has initiated a state wide program in family life education,³ a development that would have met with widespread opposition a few years ago.

Professional people, recognizing the need, still feel inadequate to meet the situation. The sixteenth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators declares:

Many educators know full well that problems of sex adjustment or maladjustment may be fundamental to happiness in life for many of their young people, but still feel rather helpless about the whole important matter.⁴

Need for a constructive program of guidance in home, school, and community is recognized by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,⁵ who recommend that a well planned program of social hygiene instruction be instituted in the public schools of the United States, adapted to the various needs and maturity levels from pre-school child to adult, particularly to parents.

This study was undertaken to determine how a group of the present generation of children are getting their sex information and guidance and what they think about it. It was hoped that such knowledge might clarify convictions as to the functions of parents and teachers in guiding the child in his sex experiences.

3. Gilmore, Bob. "Sex Goes to School in Oregon," Better Homes and Gardens, September 1947. p. 41.

4. The American Association of School Administrators, Youth Education Today, Sixteenth Yearbook. Washington D. C.: The Association, 1938. p. 102.

5. Rosa, Bess N. "Social Hygiene." Proceedings of Forty-Eighth Annual Convention. New York: National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944. p. 339.

Statement of the Problem

The aims of the study were: (1) to determine where and when the girls in the laboratory high school of a southern university secured their sex information, the nature of that information and their evaluation of it, and (2) to ascertain their attitudes in regard to sex education in high school.

Scope of the Problem

This research was limited to a study of girls in grades nine through twelve of the laboratory high school of the University of Florida to determine the sources of specified items of sex information, the girls' evaluation of that information, the age at which these specific learnings were acquired, and the girls' attitudes in regard to sex education in high school.

The Procedure

Before beginning the study the writer contacted the head of the Bureau of Educational Research, and the Dean of the College of Education of the University of Florida, in order to make certain that such a study had not previously been made there, and to secure permission to carry out the study. This was found to be a new venture and the administrative officers of the school granted their full cooperation.

The next problem was the construction of an instrument by which to secure the necessary data. It was decided to work out a form check sheet, the use of which would be followed by sampling interviews. After considerable trial and error a form was devised listing different possible sources of information, which cross checked with nine specific items of

information. The form was tested by trying it out with several girls. A few minor changes were made before having it mimeographed for use.

On the twenty-first, twenty-second, and twenty-third of January, 1948, with the cooperation of the principal of the school and of the girls' physical education director it was arranged to have the girls in small groups sent to the writer. Here, in the home economics department, where a 'rapport' had been previously established with the girls, they gave their full cooperation in carrying out directions. As word was passed around the school concerning the study that was being made, three girls who were absent when the forms were administered came to the writer and requested that they be included in the study. All girls who were in attendance at the time, were included.

The investigator explained to the girls that there is a question as to whether or not sex guidance should be given in the high school. In order to have a sound basis for deciding the question, the investigator came to the girls, themselves; this was their opportunity to participate in the development of the curriculum to meet their needs.

The investigator drew a facsimile of the form on the blackboard and explained carefully just how to fill it out, questions were answered, making sure the girls understood exactly what to do.

No names were placed on the forms. There were no visible numbers or other code by which to identify the subjects, yet the investigator had a secret means of identifying them, in case it would add to the value of the study to do so. The girls first filled in the background data giving age, grade, church affiliation, father's occupation and mother's years in school.

In checking the cross check sheet they gave the age at which they learned, and the sources of all items of information listed. Also for each checking they placed an "S" to indicate if the learning was satisfactory, or "U" to indicate that it was not. Satisfactory was defined as being truthful and satisfying to the child's need at the time and presented in an agreeable manner. Unsatisfactory was defined as being untruthful, misleading or vulgar. If the girl was unacquainted with any of the listed items of information she was instructed to leave such spaces blank.

After completing this part the girls answered the questions: "To whom or what would you go for additional information?" and "Who do you think should teach matters relating to sex?"

On the second page they checked the most satisfactory sources of information at their present age. On the back of the form they expressed themselves freely on the topic: "What, if anything, do you think the high school should do in regard to sex education?"

As the data secured by means of the check sheet was tabulated, certain questions appeared about which the writer wished additional insight. Accordingly during the last week of school interviews were arranged through the cooperation of the home-room teachers, with samplings of all age, social, and grade level groups. Of the 102 girls who took part in the study, fifty-three were interviewed.

Review of Source Materials

To avoid duplicating previous investigations and to find help for this study the following sources were carefully examined:

Palfrey, Thomas R. Guide to Bibliographies of Theses. United States and Canada, Second Edition. Chicago: American Library Association, 1940.

Monroe, Walter Scott and Shores, Louis. Bibliographies and Summaries in Education to July 1935. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1936. 470 pp.

Education Index: A Cumulative Author and Subject Index to a Selected List of Educational Periodicals, Books and Pamphlets. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1929-date.

The Bibliographic Index: A Cumulative Bibliography of Bibliographies. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1938-date.

Standard Catalog for Public Libraries. An annotated list of 12,000 titles with a full analytical index; compiled by Dorothy E. Cook and Isabel Stevenson Monroe. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1940. 2,192 pp.

Standard Catalog for Public Libraries; 1941-1945 Supplement to the 1940 Edition: an annotated list of 3,908 books with full analytical index. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1945. 796 pp.

Standard Catalog for Public Libraries; 1946-1947 Supplement to the 1940 Edition; an annotated list of 1634 books with a full analytical index; compiled by Cook, Dorothy E. and others. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948. 329 pp.

Abstracts of Theses in Home Economics Education Reported by Colleges and Universities 1931-1934. Washington, D. C.: Office of Education, 1935. 126 pp.

Abstracts of Studies in Home Economics Education 1934-1938; compiled by Amidon, Edna P. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, Department of the Interior, 1938. 43 pp.

Studies and Research in Home Economics Education Reported by Colleges and Universities. Washington, D. C.: United States Office of Education, Department of the Interior, 1937.

Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics and Home Economics Education, 1936-1937; compiled by Munsell, Hazel E. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Home Economics 1937. 115 pp.

Notes on Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics Education, 1937-38; compiled by Coon, Beulah I. Washington, D. C.: United States Office of Education, 1938. 153 pp.

Notes on Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics and Home Economics Education 1938-1939; compiled by Smith, Sybil L. Washington, D. C.: Office of Experiment Stations, United States Department of Agriculture, 1939. 219 pp.

Notes on Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics and Home Economics Education, 1939-1940; compiled by Booher, Lela E. and others. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, 1940. 210 pp.

Notes on Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics and Home Economics Education, 1940-1941; compiled by Coon, Beulah I. Washington, D. C.: Vocational Division, Home Economics Education Service, 1941. 247 pp.

Notes on Graduate Studies and Research in Home Economics and Home Economics Education 1941-1942; compiled by Smith, Sybil L. and Adams, Georgia. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State College, 1942. 211 pp.

Child Development Abstracts and Bibliography; compiled by Committee on Child Development. Washington, D. C.: National Research Council, 1927-date.

Index Medicus. American Medical Association. Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1932-date.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Related Studies

A survey of the literature revealed several studies which are in some respects related to the present one. As a general observation on the relation of sex information and attitudes to happiness in marriage, the Terman study is of interest. In his study of 1250 couples, he concluded that with respect to background variables, happily married subjects differ from the unhappily married: . . .

Their early questions about sex were more frankly answered by their parents Their premarital attitude toward sex was less often one of disgust and also less often one of eager and passionate longing Their sex instruction was less often inadequate or entirely lacking. Their chief source of sex information was less often other children.¹

An early study (1928) of practices of parents in regard to sex education seems relevant to the changing parental attitude. The Women's Cooperative Alliance of Minneapolis reported by Helen Witmer² in their program of sex education through parents to children, found that from thirty to forty per cent of the women interviewed who had children four years of age or over had given no instruction along sex lines. About seventy per cent had given instruction as to sex differences. The mother's part in reproduction increased up to nine or ten years, averaging about sixty per cent from that age up. Instruction as to the father's

1. Terman, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

2. Witmer, Helen Leland, Attitudes of Mothers Toward Sex Education. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1928.

part reached an average of about thirty per cent from twelve years up, very few giving this information earlier. In general, the amount of instruction that had been given before the women were in contact with the organization is at least twice as great as that which they had received in their own homes as children.

Hattendorf conducted a study in parent education at the University of Iowa and found in regard to the age at which children are curious about certain sex matters that

the earliest interest was displayed in the organs of the body and their functioning and in physical sex differences. This interest was followed by interest in the origin of babies, the coming of a new baby, and the process of reproduction. . . .

The greatest number of sex questions of the children came at four, five, six, seven and eight years. The subject material of the incidents. (1) origin of babies, (2) coming of a new baby, (3) intrauterine growth, (4) process of birth, (5) organs and their functions, (6) physical sex differences, (7) the father's part in reproduction, (8) marriage, and (9) all other incidents.³

Somewhat related to the present study as it indicates the child's age at receiving sex information is the study of children's awareness of sex differences by Conn and Kanner.⁴ Their study deals with the development of awareness of sex differences of two hundred boys and girls from the out-patient division of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. All social strata were reached, age range four to twelve. Differences in attire were the type of dissimilarity most frequently mentioned by the children. Of the

3. Hattendorf, Katharine Wood. University of Iowa Studies, Studies in Child Welfare, Vol. VI, Researches in Parent Education I. Iowa City: University of Iowa. 1932 p. 88.

4. Conn, Jacob H. and Kanner, Leo. "Children's Awareness of Sex Differences." Journal of Child Psychiatry. Vol. I. Section 1. 1947. pp. 3-57.

200 children, 150 named inequalities of clothing, 116 differences in urination posture, and nine made reference to breasts and nipples. The ages at which the above observations were made were not given in the report. Hair as a distinctive feature was brought out from the earliest age (four years) clothes at five years, strength and general body configuration at eight years, gait at nine years.

Gesell and Ilg,⁵ recognized authorities in child development and extensive observers of children at the Yale Clinic of Child Development, draw age-level profiles of children. In the area of sex interest Gesell and Ilg note the following: At eighteen months, no verbal distinction between boys and girls; at twenty-four months, distinguishes boys from girls by clothes and style of haircut; at thirty months, conscious of own sex organs and may handle them when clothes are off; interested in watching others in bathroom or when they are undressed; distinguishes boys from girls by different postures when urinating; beginning of interest in physiological differences between the sexes; inquires about mother's breasts; non-verbalized generalization that boys and fathers have a distinctive genital and stand when they urinate; girls and mothers do not. At thirty-six months, verbally expressed interest in physiological differences between the sexes and in different postures for urinating; girls make one or two experimental attempts to urinate standing up; desire to look at or touch adults, especially mother's breasts; expresses a general interest in babies and wants the family to have one; asks questions about babies. At four years is extremely conscious of the

5. Gesell, Arnold and Ilg, Frances L. Infant and Child in The Culture of Today. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943. pp. 343-346.

navel; questions about how babies get out of the mother's "stomach." May spontaneously think that the baby is born through the navel.

Continuing the sex interest profile from five to ten, Gesell and Ilg⁶ generalize that five as a rule does not dwell upon sex questions as he did at four. His interest in sex is chiefly in the baby, in the having of a baby. The relative quiescence of the five-year-old vanishes at six. His sex interests spread and penetrate many new and varied fields. Six is interested in marriage, the origin of babies, pregnancy, birth, the opposite sex, sex role, and a new baby in the family. Six is more interested in how the baby comes out than in how the baby starts. Seven is less likely than six to be involved in overt sex play. Some Eights, especially boys, are still searching for some of the facts about babies in relation to their starting, to the period of pregnancy, and to their birth. Many have already thought about these matters at seven. There is less interest in reproduction on the part of many Nines, if their desire for information has been satisfied at eight.

Kirkendall gives revealing age statistics on the timing of parent, church, and school guidance as compared with that of chance information. He reports an investigation in which the sources of sex information and the average age at which it was received were reported by 530 men.

The average at which they could recall first hearing associates talk about sex matters was 11.4 years. All recalled such conversations. The average age for first seeing pornographic materials (over 97 per cent has seen them) was 13.4 years. Those who had help from their parents received it on the average 14.4 years, while the

6. Gesell, Arnold and Ilg, Frances L. The Child from Five to Ten. New York: Harper Brothers, 1946. pp. 79, 116, 117, 148, 176, 202.

average age for the church to recognize the subject (which it rarely did) was 15.2 years, and for the school 15.7 years. . . . In practically every instance these boys had received their first information from associates or pornographic literature.⁷

Ramsey⁸ in a study of 291 pre-adolescent and adolescent boys found evidence to indicate that 14 per cent had received their first information about sex under six years of age. The investigator concluded that most boys were introduced to the various topics of sex information before they reached senior high school. Over ninety-five per cent at the age of fourteen knew about the origin of babies, masturbation, intercourse, and prostitution. Over eighty-six per cent at the age of fourteen knew about contraceptives.

Bromley and Britten's⁹ findings on the sources of sex education are in conformity with those of other investigators. More than half of the college men and women interviewed by these investigators had received no sex instruction from their parents, and only a small minority felt that they could discuss sex problems with their parents. About half had received some instruction in college, but few felt that it was adequate. More often than not they picked up their knowledge from their contemporaries, from books, or as the boys themselves phrased it, "from the gutter."

Although the young people who contributed to the Maryland study¹⁰

7. Kirkendall, L. A. "Facts Speak for Sex Education." The Clearing House, September 1947. p. 28.

8. Ramsey, Glenn V. "The Sex Information of Younger Boys." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, April 1943. pp. 347-352.

9. Bromley, Dorothy D. and Britten, Florence H. Youth and Sex, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938.

10. Bell, Howard, Youth Tell Their Story. Washington: American Council on Education, 1938.

were on the whole from a lower socio-economic group than those studied by Bromley and Britten, the findings are similar. Only thirty per cent of the Maryland youth reported that they had received most of their sex instruction from parents or relatives. Girls were about three times as likely as boys to discuss intimate personal matters with their parents. Protestant homes ranked highest as a major source of sex education, Catholic homes next, and Jewish homes lowest. The chief source of sex information for the young person of all ages and all religious groups was found to be his contemporaries. Sixty-six per cent of the boys and forty per cent of the girls reported that what they knew about sex was more or less limited to what friends of their own age had told them. After contemporaries and the home, the source next in importance was the school, from which about eight per cent of the young people reported that they had received most of their sex information.

Kinsey,¹¹ in his comprehensive study of the sexual behavior of the human male, gives information on patterns of sexual behavior in three educational levels, which may have implications for educational practice. It is not within the scope of this study to try to indicate those implications.

Rockwood and Ford¹² report in their study of 364 junior and senior men and women at Cornell University that

these young people checked on the average three major sources of sex information. Most frequently mentioned were books and pamphlets, and friend of the same sex. Mother ranked third, friend

11. Kinsey, Alfred C. and others, Sexual Behavior of the Human Male. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co. 1948. p. 384.

12. Rockwood, Lemo D. and Ford, Mary E. N. Youth Marriage and Parenthood. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1945. p. 26.

of opposite sex and school fourth, father and doctor fifth. Although the majority of these students were from homes where parents were highly educated only about half had received a major part of their sex instruction directly from their parents. Mothers had assumed considerably more responsibility for the sex education of their children than the fathers had, and in only ten per cent of the cases had the parents shared that responsibility.

In the Rockwood study,¹³ the question of "Who do you think should be responsible for the sex education of children?" was answered in a fashion significant to the present study. More than seventy per cent of the group checked "both parents." When the fact that only 10.4 per cent checked "both parents" as a source of their own information is considered, this opinion has an added significance. Half of the group believed the school should assume some responsibility for sex education, but only twenty-five per cent checked school as a source of their own information. Since two-thirds of the group received most of their sex education from their peers and from written sources, their insistence that parents and the school assume this responsibility is significant.

An investigation by Zilmer¹⁴ closely relates to the present study. Zilmer and Larsen of the Wisconsin State Board of Health conducted a study, by means of a simple questionnaire, using 3,300 third and fourth year high school girls for their subjects. The girls were from varying backgrounds, from small rural village to large city. It was found that about two-thirds of the girls' mothers had answered most of

13. Rockwood and Ford, op. cit., p. 31.

14. Zilmer, A. and Larsen, R. J. "What She Thinks About It": Facts and Opinions from 3,300 Wisconsin High School Girls. Journal of Social Hygiene, XXVIII November, 1942. pp. 464-468.

their sex questions. Concerning sources of their sex information the girls volunteer the following given in order of frequency: girl friend, books, magazines, older sister or aunt, doctor or nurse, movie, church, boy friend, school course. As to how the girls feel about sex guidance at school, ninety-four per cent of them think it definitely should be included in the high school course. Concerning to whom the girls would go in case of a question about the right or wrong of sex morals, fifty per cent more would go to the dean of girls than to mother. The high school girls felt that parental guidance is best.

CHAPTER III

EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION OF DATA

ON THE CHECK SHEET

Background of Girls

An examination of the background data concerning the subjects of the study, revealed that there were twenty-four girls in the ninth grade, twenty-four in the tenth, thirty-six in the eleventh, and eighteen in the twelfth grade. The age range ran from thirteen to eighteen years with no extreme variations. The church affiliations mentioned most frequently were: Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, and Catholic, in the above order. The occupations of the father classified as 34.3 per cent professional, 31.4 per cent business, 26.5 per cent skilled workers. The remainder were dead or for some reason not a part of the family group. The mothers' educational background data showed that 37.2 per cent had completed high school, 26.4 per cent had graduated from college, over 47 per cent had had some college work, and the rest were distributed from third grade to Master's degree. The above data appear in tabular form on the next page.

The above data indicate that the study was carried out with a select group. The educational background of the parents was superior. Church affiliations were for the most part with the traditional churches, predominately protestant. There were no extremely rich, nor extremely poor families represented. The majority of the children came from urban homes. (While financial status, and rural and urban were not indicated on the check sheet, the writer's acquaintance with the girls justifies

the two above observations.)

In the light of these facts it is indicated that the findings of this study come from a group of girls of superior home, and educational opportunity.

TABLE I
BACKGROUND DATA

Number	Age	Number	Grade
3	13	24	9
18	14	24	10
24	15	36	11
38	16	18	12
15	17		
4	18		

CHURCH AFFILIATIONS

Baptist	31
Presbyterian	26
Methodist	22
Episcopal	10
Catholic	5
Christian	3
Mormon	2
Lutheran	1
Christian Science	1
No affiliation	1

OCCUPATIONS OF FATHER

Classification	No.	Per cent
Professional	35	34.3
Business	32	31.4
Skilled labor	27	26.5
Father dead or missing	8	7.8
Total	102	100.0

TABLE I (Con't.)

MOTHERS' EDUCATION	
<hr/>	
Grammar School	2
High School (1 or 2 years)	12
High School (11 or 12 years)	38
College (1, 2, or 3 years)	18
College graduation	27
Graduate work	3
Not known	2
<hr/>	
Total	102

Sources of Sex Information

General Summary of all Items

With reference to the specific items of information listed on the check sheet, namely: 1. Body differences of male and female, 2. Where babies come from, 3. How a new life is started, 4. How a baby is born, 5. Body changes in growing up, 6. Menstruation, 7. Sex delinquency, 8. Venereal disease, 9. Masturbation, the following list of sources of information were checked by the girls taking part in the study: 1. Mother, 2. Father, 3. Brother or sister, 4. Others in the home, 5. Playmates, 6. Teacher, 7. Doctor or nurse, 8. Other leaders, (scout, church etc.), 9. Reading material, 10. Movies, 11. Direct observation, 12. Any other.

The girls rated their mothers first, as general source of information relating to sex. "Mother" was checked more than half again as many times as the next best source, "reading material." The source third in importance was "playmates," which was checked about one-third fewer times than was "reading material." However, the reliability of the information received from these three sources is very different. The

"mother" and "reading material" were rated as 95.1 and 96.9 per cent satisfactory as sources, while "playmates" ranked 44.4 per cent. It was frequently noted that information of an unsatisfactory nature was received from playmates first, before being straightened out by the mother or some other person, sometimes after a lapse of considerable time.

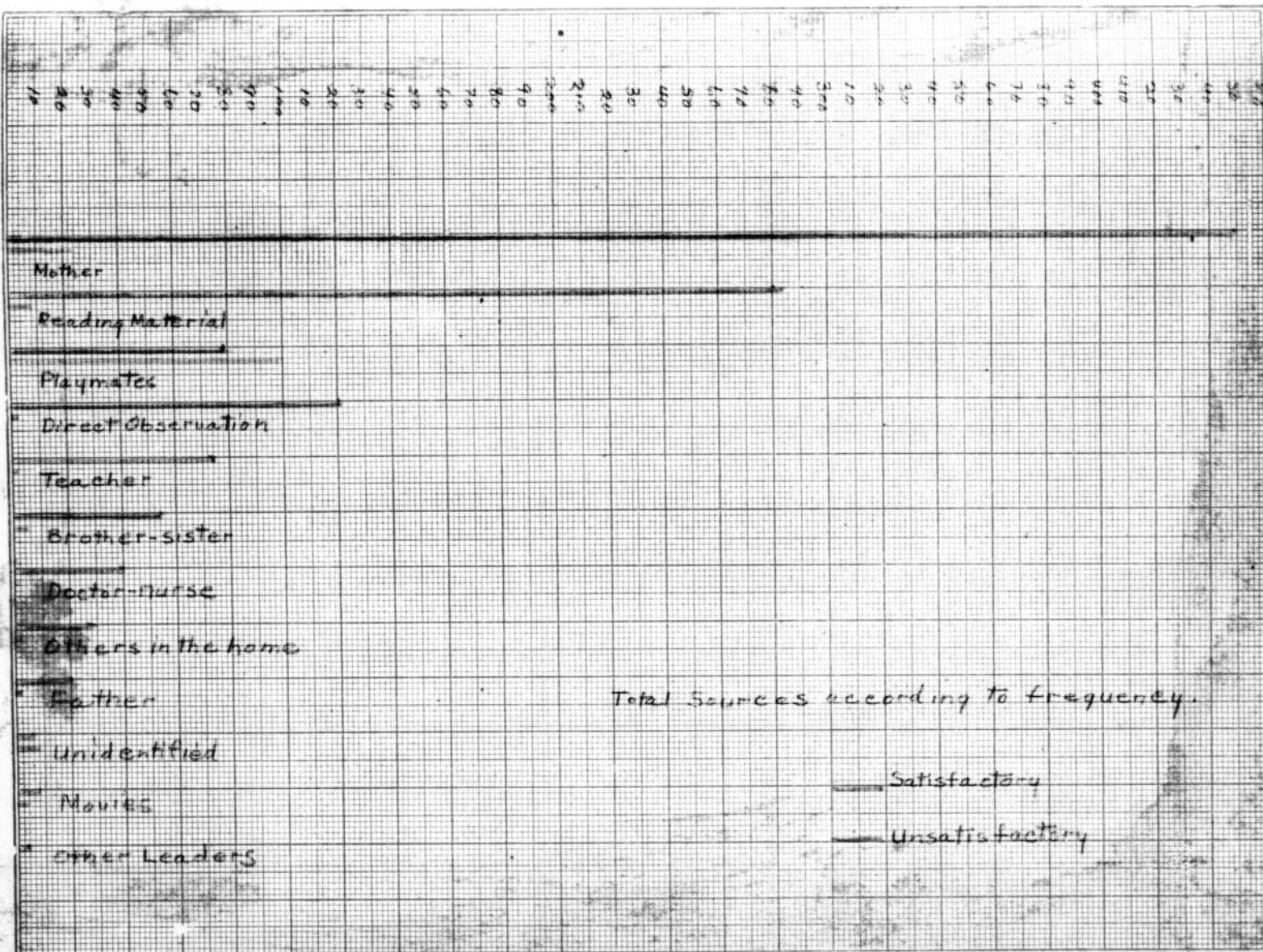
Fourth in frequency ranked "direct observation," fifth teacher, sixth brother or sister, seventh doctor or nurse, eighth, others in the home, ninth father, tenth unidentified, eleventh movies, twelfth other leaders. Except for "playmates," "unidentified," and "movies" which rated low in reliability, (44.4, 42.8, and 72.8 per cent respectively) the other sources rated high, all being above ninety per cent. See below for total sources of information according to frequency.

TABLE II

TOTAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY

Source	Satisfac- tory answers	Unsatisfac- tory	Total	Per cent satisfac- tory
Mother	449	23	472	95.1
Reading Material	284	9	293	96.9
Playmates	79	99	178	44.4
Direct observation	121	2	123	98.3
Teachers	74	2	76	97.4
Brother or Sister	55	5	60	91.6
Doctor or Nurse	40	1	41	97.6
Others in Home	29	2	31	96.8
Father	21	2	23	91.3
Unidentified source	6	8	14	42.8
Movies	8	3	11	72.8
Other Leaders	4	0	4	100.0

TABLE III



Summary of each Item In Order of
Frequency of Source

"Body differences," the first item on the check sheet, was learned about through "direct observation" more than twice as frequently than from the next rating source, "mother." "Reading material" came in third with half as many responses as "mother." The reliability of these sources rated high, coming in the same order, with "direct observation" at 98.7, "mother" 97.1, "reading material" 94.4 per cent. The frequency of sources declines gradually with brother-sister, playmates, father, teacher, others in the home, and unidentified, in that order. Brother-sister and playmates rated close to reading material for number of sources, (18, 16, 16) but their reliability drops, rating brother-sister 87.5 and playmates only 31.2 per cent. The other sources of information were rather negligible, however, their reliability ran high. (See Table IV)

"Where babies come from," second item, was learned most often from the mother, with playmates scoring slightly less than half as often. Continuing in order of frequency, the girls checked reading material, direct observation, brother-sister, teacher, others in the home, doctor-nurse, father, unidentified and movies. In reliability, the ratings ran highest for doctor-nurse, movies, reading material, and direct observation. However, the number of responses for doctor-nurse, and movies was so small that the figures are not meaningful.

TABLE IV
EACH ITEM OF INFORMATION ARRANGED ACCORDING
TO FREQUENCY OF SOURCE

Item 1. Body Differences

Source	Satis- factory	Unsatis- factory	Total	Per cent Satisfac- tory
Direct observation	80	1	81	98.7
Mother	34	1	35	97.1
Reading Material	17	1	18	94.4
Brother or sister	14	2	16	87.5
Playmates	5	11	16	31.2
Father	5	0	5	100.0
Teacher	2	0	2	100.0
Others in the home	1	0	1	100.0
Unidentified	0	1	1	0.0

Item 2. Where Babies Come From

Mother	66	17	83	79.5
Playmates	13	22	35	37.1
Reading material	30	1	31	96.8
Direct observation	10	1	11	90.9
Brother or Sister	6	3	9	66.7
Teacher	5	1	6	83.3
Others in Home	4	1	5	80.0
Doctor or nurse	4	0	4	100.0
Father	1	2	3	33.3
Unidentified	1	2	3	33.3
Movies	1	0	1	100.0

Item 3. How New Life is Started

	Sat.	Uns.	Total	Per cent Sat.
Mother	57	0	50	100.0
Reading Material	41	0	41	100.0
Playmates	11	14	25	44.0
Teacher	16	0	16	100.0
Brother or sister	4	0	4	100.0
Others in the Home	3	0	3	100.0
Doctor or nurse	3	0	3	100.0
Father	2	0	2	100.0
Other Leaders	1	0	1	100.0
Direct observation	1	0	1	100.0
Unidentified	1	0	1	100.0

Item 4. How a Baby is born

Mother	57	1	58	98.3
Reading Material	39	1	40	97.5
Playmates	10	10	20	50.0
Teacher	7	1	8	87.5
Brother or sister	6	0	6	100.0
Doctor	6	0	6	100.0
Others in Home	4	1	5	80.0
Unidentified	2	1	3	66.7
Father	1	0	1	100.0
Movies	1	0	1	100.0
Direct Observation	1	0	1	100.0

Item 5. Body changes in growing	Sat.	Uns.	Total	Per cent S
<hr/>				
Mother	70	0	70	100.0
Reading material	32	0	32	100.0
Direct observation	23	0	23	100.0
Playmates	10	8	18	55.5
Teacher	11	0	11	100.0
Doctor or nurse	9	0	9	100.0
Brother or sister	7	0	7	100.0
Others in Home	7	0	7	100.0
Father	5	0	5	100.0
Other leaders	1	0	1	100.0
Unidentified	0	1	1	0.0

Item 6. Menstruation

Mother	88	1	89	98.8
Reading material	27	0	27	100.0
Playmates	13	14	27	48.1
Doctor or nurse	12	0	12	100.0
Brother or sister	7	0	7	100.0
Teacher	6	0	6	100.0
Direct observation	6	0	6	100.0
Others in the home	4	0	4	100.0
Father	1	0	1	100.0
Other leaders	1	0	1	100.0
Unidentified	1	0	1	100.0

Item 7. Sex Delinquency	Sat.	Uns.	Total	Per cent Sat.
Reading material	43	2	45	95.5
Mother	38	2	40	95.0
Playmates	9	8	17	52.9
Brother or sister	5	0	5	100.0
Movies	5	2	5	60.0
Others in the home	4	0	4	100.0
Father	3	0	3	100.0
Teacher	3	0	3	100.0
Doctor or nurse	2	0	2	100.0
Unidentified	0	1	1	0.0

Item 8. Venereal Disease

Reading material	35	2	37	94.6
Mother	27	1	28	96.5
Teacher	16	0	16	100.0
Playmates	4	5	9	44.4
Brother or sister	4	0	4	100.0
Doctor or nurse	3	1	4	75.0
Movies	3	0	3	100.0
Father	2	0	2	100.0
Others in the home	2	0	2	100.0
Unidentified	1	1	2	50.0
Other leaders	1	0	1	100.0

Item 9. Masturbation	Sat.	Uns.	Total	Per Cent S.
Reading Material	20	2	22	90.9
Mother	12	0	12	100.0
Playmates	4	7	11	36.3
Teacher	8	0	8	100.0
Brother or sister	2	0	2	100.0
Father	1	0	1	100.0
Doctor or nurse	1	0	1	100.0
Movies	0	1	1	0.0
Unidentified	0	1	1	0.0

"How new life is started," third item, was learned about most frequently from the mother, with reading material, playmates, and teacher following in order. After a large break, the scores continue with brother-sister, others in the home, doctor-nurse, father, other leaders, direct observation and unidentified, whose combined scores are exceeded by that of teacher. As to the reliability, all the sources rated perfect reliability except playmates, who were more often wrong than right. (See Table IV)

"How a baby is born," fourth item, was learned about most frequently from the mother with reading material and playmates following. After a considerable drop, the sequence continues with teacher, brother-sister, doctor-nurse, others in the home, unidentified, father, movies, direct observation. The last three had only one instance each, but these were satisfactory. Otherwise the most reliable sources were mother and

reading material. As usual the playmates were badly confused or misinformed, rating at the bottom in reliability.

"Body changes in growing up," fifth item, was checked by the girls most frequently as learned from the mother, with the order of sequence continuing with reading material, direct observation, playmates, teacher, doctor-nurse, brother-sister, others in the home, father, other leaders, and unidentified. The reliability rated high except for playmates, who rated satisfactory on slightly over half of the responses.

"Menstruation," sixth item, was learned about oftenest from the mother, with reading material and playmates tying for second place. After a considerable drop the sequence continues in this order: doctor-nurse, brother-sister, teacher, direct observation, others in the home, father, other leaders, unidentified. All sources rated high in reliability, with the usual exception of playmates, who were misinformed more than half the time.

"Sex Delinquency," seventh item, was learned about most frequently from reading material, with mother and playmates following. After a considerable break, along dribble the following in order: brother-sister, movies, others in the home, father, teacher, doctor-nurse, and unidentified. Again they all rated high except playmates, who were about half right and half wrong.

"Venereal disease," eighth item, was learned about largely from reading material, mother and teacher. After that, the order of frequency runs as follows: playmates, brother-sister, doctor-nurse, movies, father, others in the home, unidentified, other leaders. In this case the reliability ran high except for playmates who were more often wrong than right, and the unidentified source.

"Masturbation," ninth and last item, was learned about, if it was, most frequently from reading material, mother, playmates, teacher, in that order. Little information came from brother-sister, father, doctor-nurse, movies, or unidentified source. Reliability of the information rated well except for playmates who were right about one-third of the time.

Summarizing, it was found that in regard to the sources of sex information, the different items varied considerably, but in general "mother" ranked first, being checked more than half again as many times as the next best source. Reliability ran high for all sources except "playmates" who were more often misinformed than not. Unidentified, and movies were not good, but they were negligible as sources.

Ages at Which Information is Received

The ages at which information was received appear to correspond roughly to Gesell's behavior profiles as given earlier in this manuscript.

In the matter of body differences there was found, in this study, to be a rapid rise of interest from two years to five, then an abrupt decline, with a small rise between nine and ten. Each item showed a different age curve, (See Table V). As to the origin of babies, "where babies come from" showed an earlier rise of interest than did "how new life is started" or "how a baby is born." "Where babies come from" rose to gradually ascending peaks at five, eight, and ten years, with rapid falling off after that time. "How new life is started" showed little interest before seven, then there was an increase, reaching a peak at twelve. "How a baby is born" got some impetus by six, rose to a peak at ten, declined at eleven, rose again at twelve, and thirteen, before sloping off.

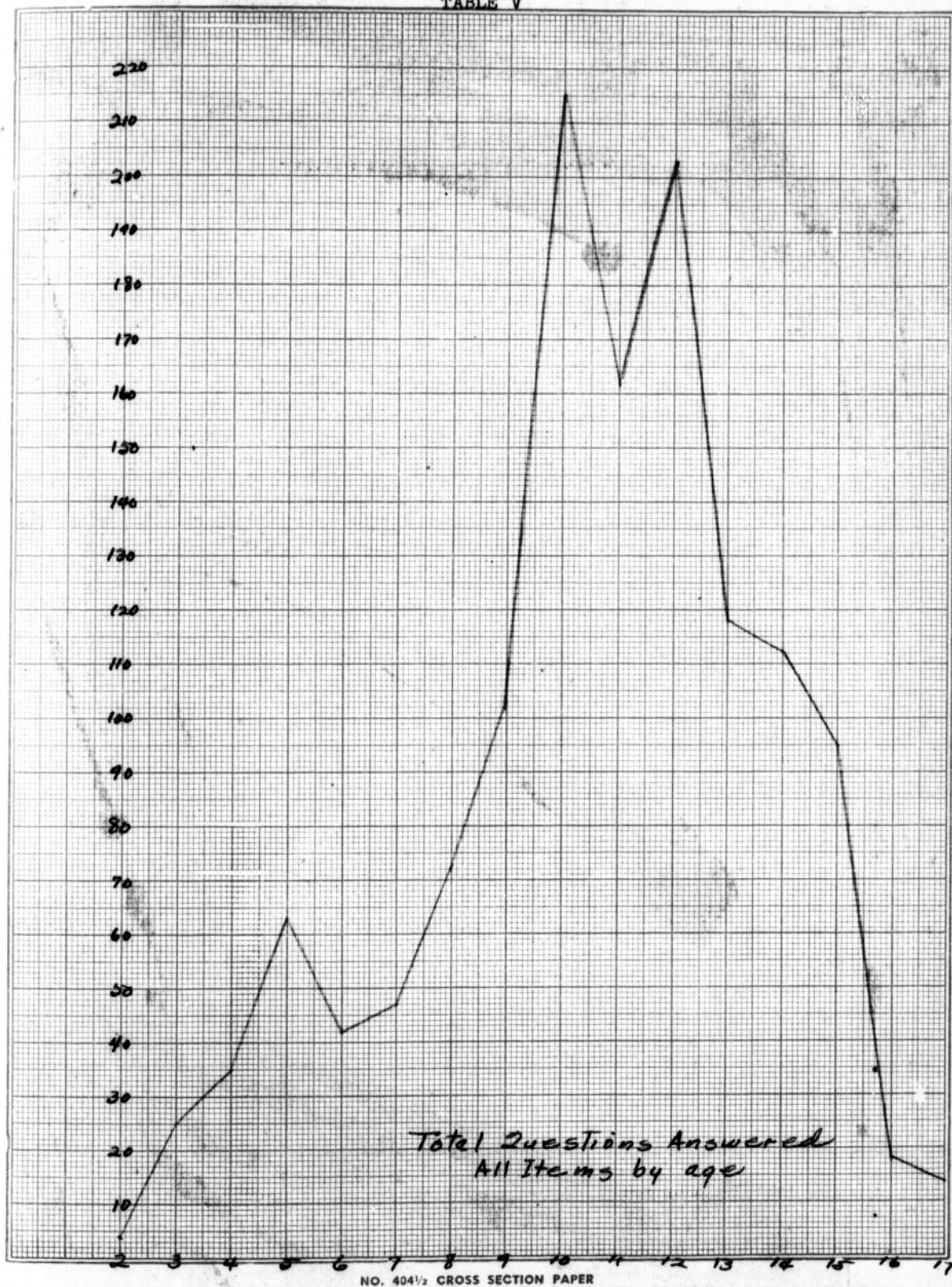
"Body changes in growing up" showed little knowledge before seven, then a steep increase to a peak at ten, rapid decline to eleven-twelve plateau, then rapid drop. "Menstruation" showed little information before eight, a rapid increase to ten, slow increase to twelve, then rapid falling off.

"Sex delinquency" information showed an incident or two before eight, an increase to ten, less at eleven, peak at twelve, then a decline.

Information concerning venereal disease showed an incline between nine and twelve, a higher peak at fourteen then a decline to sixteen.

Knowledge of masturbation varied with some information at ten, a drop at eleven, an increase to fifteen then a decline. The frequent omission in checking of the last three items suggests that information concerning them is not very general among the high school girls with whom the study was made.

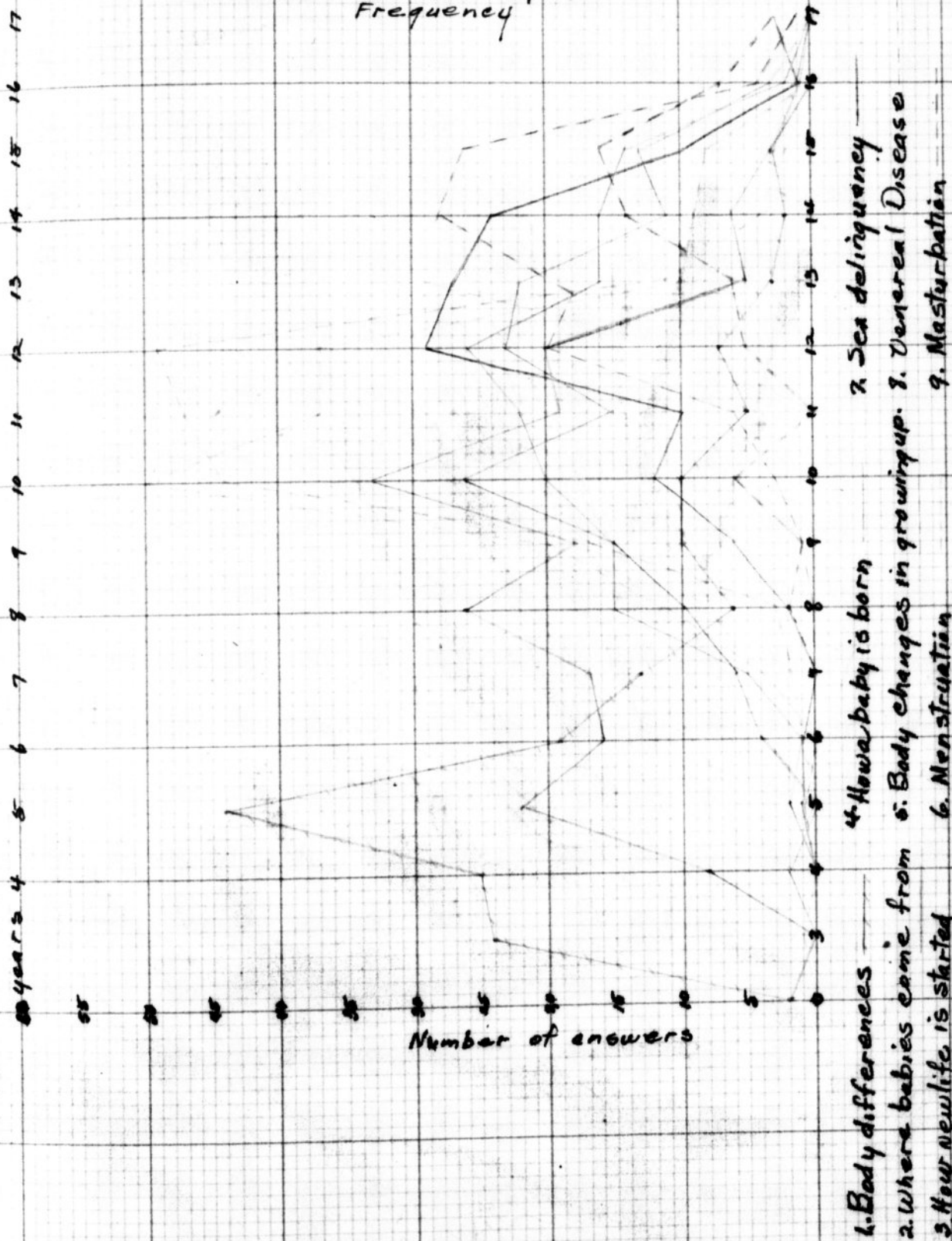
TABLE V



NO. 404½ CROSS SECTION PAPER

TABLE VI

Individual Questions by age and Frequency



Adequacy of Information

As the girls filled out the check sheets they were instructed that in case they knew nothing about an item of information listed to leave the space blank. In tabulating it was found that the last three items, namely, sex delinquency, venereal disease, and masturbation, were left blank a significant number of times. Of twenty-four girls in the ninth grade, nine or 37.5 per cent did not check sex delinquency; eighteen, or 75 per cent omitted venereal disease; seventeen or 29.9 per cent omitted masturbation.

In the tenth grade a rather similar situation prevailed. Of the twenty-four girls, eight, or one-third did not check sex delinquency; fourteen, or 58.3 per cent did not check venereal disease; and nineteen or 79.9 per cent omitted masturbation.

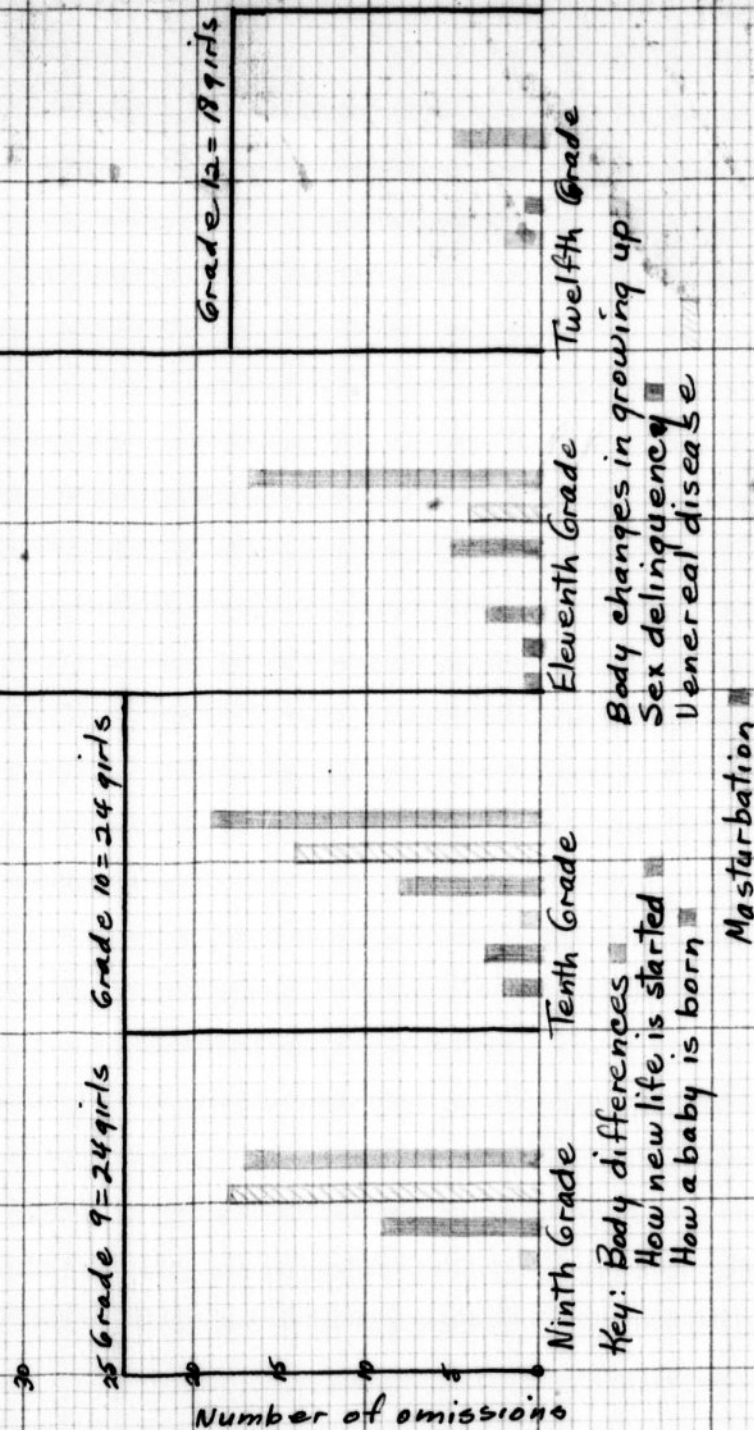
Of the thirty-six girls in the eleventh grade the number of omissions ran small except for masturbation; in which case seventeen, or 47.2 per cent of the girls omitted the item.

In the twelfth grade, the eighteen girls made no large scale omissions, five or 27.7 per cent omitted checking masturbation, their largest omission.

In the light of the above data the writer concluded that with the group of girls studied, there was a high incidence of lack of information concerning the last three listed items, with a decline of that lack during the eleventh and twelfth grades. Evidence does not indicate that information is always adequate by the end of the twelfth grade.

TABLE VII

Adequacy of Information

Items omitted indicating lack of information
Grade 11 = 36 girls

Education Related to Mothers' Effectiveness
in Sex Guidance

The writer was interested in learning if there is any significant relationship between the mothers' years of school and her effectiveness in informing her children in matters concerning sex. According to the data, the better educated mother gave somewhat more sex guidance, but, being a college graduate did not assure the mother's effectiveness in this area. Reading material, frequently checked, may have been suggested by the better trained mother, without giving her credit for such, however, this is merely a plausible assumption. (See Table VIII.) However, it appears that the better educated mother did a better job of sex guidance of her daughter.

TABLE VIII

MOTHERS' EDUCATION RELATED TO SEX EDUCATION EFFICIENCY

Mothers' years in school	Questions Answered Satisfactorily	No. of Mothers	Answers per Mother
Grammar school	5	2	2.5
High School (1 or 2 years)	37	12	3.4
High School (3 or 4 years)	167	38	4.6
College (1, 2, 3 years)	80	18	4.6
College graduate	116	27	4.6
Graduate work	27	3	9.0

Religion of Mother Related to Effectiveness
In Sex Guidance

Do members of some religious faiths do a better job of giving sex guidance in the home than do others? In the present study, there were thirty-one Baptists, twenty-six Presbyterians, twenty-two Methodists, ten Episcopalians, and five Catholics. The other religious faiths represented were so few in number, that conclusions drawn from so limited data would be worthless. For the five churches in predominance in the study, the number is still small. Tabulation of these showed no significant relationship between church denomination and home sex guidance. There was a slight edge in favor of the Catholic, with Methodist second, but the cases were too few to be significant. (See Table IX).

TABLE IX

RELIGION RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS IN SEX GUIDANCE

Denomination	Total Answers	No. of Mothers	Answers per Mother
Baptist	137	31	4.1
Presbyterian	118	26	4.5
Methodist	107	22	4.9
Catholic	19	5	5.8

Summary of Check Sheet Findings

Background data indicate that the girls of this study came from homes superior in occupation of father and education of mother.

Concerning the sources of sex information, the different items varied considerably, but in general "mother" ranked first, being checked more than half again as many times as the next best source, "reading

material." The third source in importance was "playmates," which was checked about two-thirds as often as "reading material." Continuing, the sources ran as follows: direct observation, teacher, brother or sister, doctor or nurse, others in the home, father, unidentified, movies, other leaders.

Reliability ran high for all sources except "playmates," who were more often misinformed than not. Unidentified, and movies, were not good, but they were negligible sources.

Ages at which the different items of information were gained showed noticeable differences. Knowledge of body differences was gained by five years. "Where babies come from," showed considerable knowledge at five, with more gained later. "How new life is started" reached its peak at twelve. "How a baby is born" was known at ten, "body changes in growing up" at ten, "menstruation," at ten to twelve, "sex delinquency" at twelve, "venereal disease" at fourteen, and "masturbation" at fifteen.

The data indicate that information concerning the last three items was not very general among the high school girls with whom the study was made.

According to the data, the better educated mother gave somewhat more sex guidance.

There was no significant relationship between church affiliation and the effectiveness in sex guidance.

CHAPTER IV

OPINIONS OF GIRLS ON SEX EDUCATION

Present Preferred Sources

In answer to the question, "To whom and where would you go for additional information?" concerning matters relating to sex, the girls gave their mothers a heavy vote of confidence, with reading material, teacher, and doctor following in that order. After a big drop they mentioned friend, parents, nurse, sister, aunt or grandmother, likewise in diminishing importance.

As to the most satisfactory sources of information at the present time, the girls again stated their convictions that mother is best. Running second to mother came reading material, followed by teacher, then doctor or nurse, and direct observation. The other sources were negligible in responses given.

In order of preference, the girls gave their present sources of sex guidance to be mother, reading material, teacher, doctor. (See Tables X and XI).

Who Should Teach Sex Guidance

In response to the question, "Who do you think should teach matters relating to sex?" the girls gave the teacher wholehearted support, rating her far ahead of mother, who came in second, then parents, followed by nurse and doctor. (See Table XII).

TABLE X

TO WHOM OR WHAT WOULD YOU GO FOR
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Sources	No. of Responses
Mother	70
Reading material	25
Teacher	21
Doctor	14
Friend	7
Nurse	6
Parents.	6
Sister	5
Aunt or grandmother	3

TABLE XI

MOST SATISFACTORY SOURCES OF INFORMATION AT
THE PRESENT TIME

Sources	No. of Responses
Mother	95
Reading material	68
Teacher	44
Doctor or nurse	40
Direct observation	20
Father	7
Friends	7
Brother or sister	5
Movies	3
Other leaders (scout, church, etc.). .	4
Others in the home	2

TABLE XII

WHO SHOULD TEACH SEX GUIDANCE

Sources	No. of Responses
Teacher	77
Mother	42
Parents	14
Nurse	15
Doctor	12
Older brothers or sisters	1

What Should the High School Do

In response to the question of "What, if anything, should the high school do in regard to sex education?" a remarkably high affirmative vote was given. Of the 102 girls taking part in the study, only three said it should be done at home and not in the school. Of these three girls, all were ninth graders, who had had no exposure to the limited program in the school. They had not had biology, where the principles of heredity, and basic facts of reproduction are presented, nor had they had Home Economics with its more complete program. As to church affiliation, they were one Baptist, one Episcopalian, and one Catholic. The mothers' education, in each case, had been limited to high school. Two of the fathers were highly educated, the other a skilled worker. It appears that the common ground on which these girls stood was limited to that of grade level, and a lack of exposure to the school program.

One other ninth grade girl made a significant remark, that "there is no need for a sex education program in high school, for you usually find out about these things earlier, anyway." The fact that information is so frequently gained from playmates or other unreliable sources before it is gained from sanctioned sources was observed while tabulating the check sheet data.

The other ninety-eight girls said that they thought such a program should be included in the high school curriculum. Forty-two "went all out for it with no strings attached," saying that a thorough and complete job should be done, leaving no questions unanswered, and that it would result in better attitudes and behavior among boys and girls. Others said that they thought if it were taught in all schools, that sex delinquency would be greatly reduced.

Thirty-two of the girls definitely stated that it should be taught by the home economics teacher. Twelve expressed themselves as being in favor of separate classes for boys and girls, three thought mixed classes best. Nine thought it should be given in the physical education department, seven mentioned the school nurse, and six thought it should be given in science, particularly in biology. Three considered that it should be elective, but the rest felt that all should be included in the classes. Six remarked that it should be taught in the home and continued in the school.

The importance of the character and personality of the teacher was stressed by several girls who made such remarks as, "it should be taught by a teacher who is well trained for it," "one who can create a comfortable relaxed atmosphere in class," "one who is unembarrassed at dealing with the subject," "one who can make you feel that sex is clean

and wholesome."

All girls who have had home economics gave the program their wholehearted support. Of these, those who mentioned who should teach the subject said, with one exception, the home economics teacher. One exception was a girl who is very interested in athletics, and who voted for the physical education department to do it.

Girls who had had the program in home economics were most appreciative of the work. Such remarks as these are typical, "It means so much to know the proper names of the reproductive organs, so you can talk about sex without it seeming vulgar." "I won't be afraid now, that I know the truth." "Why couldn't we have had this in the ninth grade." "The boys certainly should have such a program." "Boys and girls need to know about each other's problems, so they can understand each other."

Thus the girls who had had experience in the program expressed themselves as being highly in favor of a sex education program in the school, and the present program with extensions was generally endorsed.

Interviews

In introducing the interviews with the girls some such explanation as the following was used.

"In tabulating the results of the check sheet which you filled out there are certain questions that occurred to me which you can help me clear up. When I made out the check sheet, I listed all the possible sources of information of which I could think, then I put in the 'any other' in case I had omitted something. A few of the girls checked the 'any other' column. In your experience, what could that be?"

Most of the girls could think of no "other," a few mentioned aunt or other relative, or girl friend.

"Reading material was checked rather extensively. What reading materials dealing with these subjects have you had?"

Many of the girls had read the materials made available through the home economics department. They also reported materials suggested by the mother, books they had run across in the library, and five girls had read from doctor or nursing books which frightened them, or were above their comprehension. Several mentioned novels, and expressed disapproval of the vulgarity included in many of them. A few girls were of the opinion that there is a considerable amount of reading of this type of novel at the ninth grade level, less at the tenth, but that as the girls get a better understanding of matters relating to sex, this type of reading has diminishing appeal.

"Have you seen or read any materials of a vulgar nature dealing with sex, being passed around underhandedly among the boys or girls?"

None of the girls admitted having had contact with this type of material.

"When the boys and girls are unsupervised, is there much passing of vulgar jokes?"

The girls agreed that there is some, more in certain groups than in others, a few thought there is considerable, but this opinion was balanced by the opinion of others that there is little. One could conclude that this varies among the different peer groups. The girls were generally of the opinion that the boys participate in this type of activity more than do the girls.

"On the whole how do you rate the boys and girls of the school in regard to the wholesomeness of their attitudes toward sex, marriage, reproduction, and such matters?"

With the exception of two answers, the girls considered the whole situation to be wholesome, many said very wholesome. The two girls who felt that it was not so good were girls with an exceedingly strict religious and home background. In comparing the atmosphere in this respect with that of other schools, girls who had gone to school in the usual public school said that the atmosphere in the laboratory school was far more wholesome.

It is the conclusion of the writer that the attitude of the high school students in the laboratory school is remarkably serious and wholesome. This conclusion was reached as the result of interviewing the girls, and as the result of serving as their teacher and counselor.

Although the quality of home from which these girls come no doubt has a beneficial effect, the writer believes that the influence of three years of the family life program is showing favorable results.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

A study was made in the laboratory school of the University of Florida with the girls from grades nine through twelve to determine the sources of specified items of sex information, the girls' evaluation of that information, the ages at which these learnings were acquired, and the girls' attitudes in regard to sex education in high school.

The procedure was the development of a form check sheet, the administering of which, supplemented by sampling interviews provided the data for the study.

Background data on the girls indicated that they came from homes with superior educational opportunity.

Concerning the sources of sex information the different items varied considerably, but in general, "mother" ranked first, being far ahead of the next best source, "reading material." Continuing, in order of importance, the sources ran as follows: playmates, direct observation, teacher, brother or sister, doctor or nurse, others in the home, father, unidentified, movies, and other leaders.

Reliability ran high for all sources except "playmates," who were more often misinformed than not. "Unidentified" and "movies," were not rated good, but they were negligible sources.

Ages at which the different items of information were gained showed noticeable differences. Knowledge of body differences was gained by five years. "Where babies come from," showed considerable knowledge

at five, with more gained later. "How new life is started" reached a peak at twelve. "How a baby is born" was known at ten, "body changes in growing up" at ten, "menstruation," at ten to twelve, "sex delinquency" at twelve, "venereal disease" at fourteen, and "masturbation" at fifteen.

Information concerning the last three items was not very general among the high school girls with whom the study was made.

The better educated mother gave somewhat more sex guidance, but there was no significant relationship shown between church affiliation and the effectiveness in this area.

The girls' opinions on sex education brought out some interesting facts and comments. Concerning the question of to whom or what the girls would go for additional information on matters related to sex, and their most satisfactory present source of information, they listed their mothers first by a wide margin, with reading material, teacher, and doctor following.

As to who should teach sex guidance, the girls placed the teacher first, far ahead of the next source, mother, then came parents, nurse, and doctor.

Concerning the question of what the high school should do in regard to sex education, the girls were predominately in favor of such a program for both boys and girls and gave high endorsement of the present program with requests for enlarging it. The character and personality, good judgment and training of the teacher were considered particularly important, for a successful program of this type.

Conclusions

It is recognized by the writer that the findings of this study come from a limited number of girls, and that their home background, on a whole, is superior.

Concerning the sources of sex information, in this study the mothers did a much better job of guiding their daughters, than was found to be true in the Maryland study, or the Bromley and Britton study, where contemporaries were rated ahead of the home.

Again the mothers in the present study exceeded by comparison with the Rockwood study, where college students rated books and pamphlets, and friend of the same sex, ahead of mother. The findings compare favorably with those of the Zilmer study in which two-thirds of the girls' mothers had answered most of their sex questions. The high proportion of intelligent, well educated mothers in the present study show a positive relationship with their superior job of guiding their daughters in matters relating to sex.

Reading material rated high in the present study as a source of information. This corresponds to the findings of the other studies mentioned. The father as a source of information rated low in the present study, as was the case in the Rockwood study.

It is recognized that the reported ages at which the girls had learned sex facts were subject to the inaccuracies of memory, but even so, they still correspond roughly to the interest levels outlined by Gesell. The fact that even in this more favored group the girls frequently learned misconceptions from their playmates or other unreliable sources before receiving correct information at home or school, points the need for more early sex guidance.

Concerning the questions of who should give sex guidance, and what the school should do about it, the girls in the present study overwhelmingly asked for the school to include sex guidance in the curriculum. This seems significant in the light of the fact that the mothers, comparatively speaking, are doing an unusually good job. The writer concludes that intelligent guidance of the child in preschool years by the parent is most important, and that as the child enters school, a cooperative program of home, school, church, and other youth agencies, for the development of properly informed wholesome youth is a goal toward which to strive.

Recommendations

This study justifies the following recommendations:

In as much as the need for sex guidance begins early and the parents' responsibility is so great, a program of training of parents for adequate sex guidance of children is recommended.

It is also recommended that inasmuch as, the girls have specified that the school take the responsibility for further guidance that teachers be selected and trained, and an adequate program for both boys and girls be planned. Suitable reading materials should be developed and made available.

To further strengthen plans for such a program, it would be desirable to carry out a similar study with boys, and also one with girls from less privileged circumstances.

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APPENDIX

Church

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factory or even misleading at that age

Sources of information

1. Mother

2. Father

3. Brother or sister

4. Others in home

5. Playmates

6. Teacher

7. Doctor or nurse

8. Other leaders, (scouts,
Sunday school, church, club, etc.

9. Reading material

10. Movies

11. Direct observation

12. Any other

To whom or what would you go for additional information?
Who do you think should teach matters relating to sex?

Source of information

Check the most satisfactory source of information for any or all items as you now feel		Source of information
1. Body differences of male and female		1. Mother
2. Where babies come from		2. Father
3. How a new life is started		3. Brother or sister
4. How a baby is born		4. Others in home
5. Body changes in growing up		5. Playmates
6. Menstruation		6. Teachers
7. Sex delinquency		7. Doctor or nurse
8. Venereal disease		8. Other leaders (scout, Sunday school, church, club, etc.)
9. Masturbation		9. Reading material
		10. Movies
		11. Direct observation
		12. Any other